



State of Wisconsin  
2015 - 2016 LEGISLATURE

LRB-0707/2  
TKK:wlj

## 2015 ASSEMBLY BILL 288

July 22, 2015 – Introduced by Representatives KAHL, HESSELBEIN, SARGENT, ZEPNICK, CONSIDINE and OHNSTAD, cosponsored by Senators CARPENTER, RISSER and RINGHAND. Referred to Committee on Campaigns and Elections.

1     **AN ACT** *to repeal* 5.35 (6) (b), 5.51 (7), 5.81 (4), 5.91 (6), 7.50 (1) (d) and 8.50 (3)  
2           (c); *to renumber and amend* 5.37 (4); and *to amend* 5.02 (16m), 5.62 (1), 5.62  
3           (2), 5.62 (3), 5.655 (1), 5.84 (1), 5.91 (1) and (3), 6.80 (2) (am), 6.80 (2) (f), 6.87  
4           (4) (b) 1., 7.08 (2) (b), 7.50 (2) (g), 8.16 (1), (6) and (7), 8.17 (1) (a), 8.20 (9), 8.50  
5           (3) (b), 9.10 (3) (e), 10.02 (3) (b) 2. and 11.06 (7m) (a) of the statutes; **relating**  
6           **to:** authorizing electors to vote in the primary of more than one political party.

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### *Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

Presently, a voter in a partisan primary election may cast a ballot or vote in the column of only one major political party, regardless of the number of candidates who are running for office in that party, if any. Similarly, a voter in a partisan primary may vote for any of the independent candidates for state office, but if the voter chooses this option, he or she may not vote for any party candidates for any office. (Candidates of minor parties appear on the ballot as independent candidates.)

This bill permits a voter in a partisan primary to “split tickets,” designating the candidate of his or her choice for each office, including the offices of governor and lieutenant governor, regardless of party affiliation. The bill also allows a voter to vote for independent candidates for one or more state offices in a partisan primary, in addition to party candidates for one or more state or county offices. Under the bill, a voter may still vote for only one candidate for each office. The voting procedure at

**ASSEMBLY BILL 288**

the general election and other partisan elections is unaffected by the bill. The bill initially applies to voting at the 2016 partisan primary election.

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*The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:*

1           **SECTION 1.** 5.02 (16m) of the statutes is amended to read:

2           5.02 (16m) “Recognized political party” means a political party which ~~that~~  
3           qualifies for a separate ballot or column or row on partisan primary and election  
4           ballots under s. 5.62 (1) (b) or (2).

5           **SECTION 2.** 5.35 (6) (b) of the statutes is repealed.

6           **SECTION 3.** 5.37 (4) of the statutes is renumbered 5.37 (4) (intro.) and amended  
7           to read:

8           5.37 (4) Voting machines may be used at primary elections when they comply  
9           with subs. (1) and (2) and the following provisions: ~~All candidates’ names~~

10          (a) Each candidate’s name entitled to appear on the ballots ~~ballot~~ at the  
11          primary and the party that he or she represents shall appear on the machine; ~~the~~  
12          elector cannot vote for candidates of more than one party, whenever the restriction  
13          applies; ~~the elector may secretly select the party for which he or she wishes to vote;~~  
14          ~~the~~.

15          (b) The elector may vote for as many candidates for each office as he or she is  
16          lawfully entitled to vote for, but no more.

17          **SECTION 4.** 5.51 (7) of the statutes is repealed.

18          **SECTION 5.** 5.62 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

19          5.62 (1) (a) At the partisan primary, the following ballot shall be provided for  
20          the nomination of candidates of recognized political parties for national, state, and  
21          county offices and independent candidates for state office in each ward, in the same

**ASSEMBLY BILL 288**

1 form as prescribed by the board under s. 7.08 (1) (a), except as authorized in s. 5.655.  
2 The ballots ballot shall be made up of the several party tickets with each party  
3 entitled to participate in the primary under par. (b) or sub. (2) having its own ballot,  
4 ~~except as authorized in s. 5.655. The ballots shall be secured together at the bottom~~  
5 column or row. The party ballot column or row of the party receiving the most votes  
6 for president or governor at the last general election shall be ~~on top~~ first with the  
7 other parties arranged in descending order based on their vote for president or  
8 governor at the last general election. The ballots columns or rows of parties  
9 qualifying under sub. (2) shall be placed ~~after~~ to the right of or below the parties  
10 qualifying under par. (b), in the same order in which the parties filed petitions with  
11 the board. Any ballot required under par. (b) 2. shall be placed next in order. At  
12 polling places where voting machines are used, each party shall be represented in  
13 one or more separate columns or rows on the ballot. At polling places where an  
14 electronic voting system is used other than an electronic voting machine, each party  
15 may be represented in separate columns or rows on the ballot. An elector at the  
16 partisan primary may vote for any candidate for each office regardless of the political  
17 affiliation of the candidate.

18 (b) 1. Except as provided in subd. 2. and s. 5.64 (1) (e) 2., every recognized  
19 political party listed on the official ballot at the last gubernatorial election whose  
20 candidate for any statewide office received at least ~~1%~~ 1 percent of the total votes cast  
21 for that office and, if the last general election was also a presidential election, every  
22 recognized political party listed on the ballot at that election whose candidate for  
23 president received at least ~~1%~~ 1 percent of the total ~~vote~~ votes cast for that office shall  
24 have ~~a separate primary ballot or one or more separate columns or rows on the~~  
25 ~~primary ballot as prescribed in par. (a) and a separate column on the general election~~

**ASSEMBLY BILL 288****SECTION 5**

1 ballot at the partisan primary and general election in every ward and election  
2 district. An organization which that was listed as “independent” at the last general  
3 election and whose candidate meets the same qualification shall receive the same  
4 ballot status upon petition of to the board by the chairperson and secretary of the  
5 organization ~~to the board~~ requesting such status and specifying their party name,  
6 which may not duplicate the name of an existing party. A petition under this  
7 subdivision may be filed no later than 5 p.m. on April 1 in the year of each general  
8 election.

9 2. Subdivision 1. applies to a party within any assembly district or county at  
10 any partisan primary election only if at least one candidate of the party for any  
11 national, state, or county office qualifies to have his or her name appear on the ballot  
12 under the name of that party within that assembly district or county. The county  
13 clerk or county board of election commissioners shall provide ~~a combined separate~~  
14 ~~ballot or~~ one or more separate columns or rows on the ballot that will permit an  
15 elector to cast a vote for a write-in candidate for the nomination of any such party  
16 for each national, state, and county office whenever that party qualifies to be  
17 represented ~~on a separate primary ballot or~~ in one or more separate columns or rows  
18 under subd. 1. but does not qualify under this subdivision. The ballot shall include  
19 the name of each party qualifying for ~~a separate ballot or~~ one or more separate  
20 columns or rows on the ballot under each office, with the names of the candidates for  
21 each such party appearing in the same order in which the ballots columns or rows  
22 of the parties would appear under par. (a).

23 **SECTION 6.** 5.62 (2) of the statutes is amended to read:

24 5.62 (2) (a) Except as provided in par. (b) and s. 5.64 (1) (e) 2., any political  
25 organization may be represented ~~on a separate primary ballot or~~ in one or more

**ASSEMBLY BILL 288**

1 separate columns or rows on the partisan primary ballot as prescribed in sub. (1) (a)  
2 and in a separate column or row on the general election ballot in every ward and  
3 election district. To qualify for a separate ~~ballot~~ column or row under this paragraph,  
4 the political organization shall, not later than 5 p.m. on April 1 in the year of the  
5 partisan primary, file with the board a petition requesting separate ballot status.  
6 The petition shall be signed by at least 10,000 electors, including at least 1,000  
7 electors residing in each of at least 3 separate congressional districts. The petition  
8 shall conform to the requirements of s. 8.40. No signature obtained before January  
9 1 in the year of filing is valid. When the candidates of a political organization filing  
10 a valid petition fulfill the requirements prescribed by law, they shall appear ~~on a~~  
11 ~~separate ballot or~~ in one or more separate columns or rows on the ballot for the  
12 period ending with the following general election.

13 (b) Paragraph (a) applies to a party within any assembly district or county at  
14 any partisan primary election only if at least one candidate of the party for any  
15 national, state, or county office qualifies to have his or her name appear on the ballot  
16 under the name of that party within that assembly district or county. The county  
17 clerk or county board of election commissioners shall provide ~~a combined separate~~  
18 ~~ballot or~~ one or more separate columns or rows on the ballot that will permit an  
19 elector to cast a vote for a write-in candidate for the nomination of any such party  
20 for each national, state, and county office whenever that party qualifies to be  
21 represented ~~on a separate primary ballot or~~ in one or more separate columns or rows  
22 under par. (a) but does not qualify under this paragraph. The ballot shall include the  
23 name of each party qualifying for ~~a separate ballot or~~ one or more separate columns  
24 or rows on the ballot under each office, with the names of the candidates for each such

**ASSEMBLY BILL 288****SECTION 6**

1 party appearing in the same order in which the ballots columns or rows of the parties  
2 would appear under sub. (1) (a).

3 **SECTION 7.** 5.62 (3) of the statutes is amended to read:

4 5.62 (3) The board shall designate the official primary ballot arrangement for  
5 statewide offices and district attorney within each prosecutorial district by using the  
6 same procedure as provided in s. 5.60 (1) (b). On each ballot ~~and on each~~ separate  
7 column or row on the ballot, the candidates for office shall be listed together with the  
8 offices ~~which~~ that they seek in the following order whenever these offices appear on  
9 the partisan primary ballot: governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general,  
10 secretary of state, state treasurer, U.S. senator, U.S. representative in congress,  
11 state senator, representative to the assembly, district attorney, and the county  
12 offices.

13 **SECTION 8.** 5.655 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

14 5.655 (1) Whenever a separate ballot is required to be used, a municipality may  
15 use a single ballot to facilitate the use of voting machines or an electronic voting  
16 system or, if the municipality employs paper ballots, may use a consolidated paper  
17 ballot that is authorized under sub. (2). If a municipality uses a single ballot in lieu  
18 of separate ballots, the ballot shall include a separate column or row for any office,  
19 or referendum ~~or party~~ for which a separate ballot is required by law and the ballot  
20 shall be distributed only to electors who are eligible to vote for all of the offices and  
21 referenda appearing on the ballot.

22 **SECTION 9.** 5.81 (4) of the statutes is repealed.

23 **SECTION 10.** 5.84 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

24 5.84 (1) Where any municipality employs an electronic voting system ~~which~~  
25 that utilizes automatic tabulating equipment, either at the polling place or at a

**ASSEMBLY BILL 288**

1 central counting location, the municipal clerk shall, on any day not more than 10  
2 days prior to the election day on which the equipment is to be utilized, have the  
3 equipment tested to ascertain that it will correctly count the votes cast for all offices  
4 and on all measures. Public notice of the time and place of the test shall be given by  
5 the clerk at least 48 hours prior to the test by publication of a class 1 notice under  
6 ch. 985 in one or more newspapers published within the municipality if a newspaper  
7 is published therein, otherwise in a newspaper of general circulation therein. The  
8 test shall be open to the public. The test shall be conducted by processing a  
9 preaudited group of ballots so marked as to record a predetermined number of valid  
10 votes for each candidate and on each referendum. The test shall include for each  
11 office one or more ballots ~~which~~ that have votes in excess of the number allowed by  
12 law ~~and, for a partisan primary election, one or more ballots which have votes cast~~  
13 ~~for candidates of more than one recognized political party,~~ in order to test the ability  
14 of the automatic tabulating equipment to reject such votes. If any error is detected,  
15 the municipal clerk shall ascertain the cause and correct the error. The clerk shall  
16 make an errorless count before the automatic tabulating equipment is approved by  
17 the clerk for use in the election.

18 **SECTION 11.** 5.91 (1) and (3) of the statutes are amended to read:

19 5.91 (1) It enables an elector to vote in secrecy ~~and to select the party for which~~  
20 ~~an elector will vote in secrecy at a partisan primary election.~~

21 (3) ~~Except in primary elections, it~~ It enables an elector to vote for a ticket  
22 selected in part from the nominees of one party, and in part from the nominees of  
23 other parties, and in part from independent candidates ~~and, except in the case of~~  
24 independent candidates at primary elections, in part ~~of~~ from candidates whose  
25 names are written in by the elector.



**ASSEMBLY BILL 288****SECTION 12**

1           **SECTION 12.** 5.91 (6) of the statutes is repealed.

2           **SECTION 13.** 6.80 (2) (am) of the statutes is amended to read:

3           6.80 (2) (am) In partisan primaries, an elector may vote for a person as the  
4 candidate of the party of the elector's choice, if that person's name does not appear  
5 on the official ballot of that party, by writing in the name of the person in the space  
6 provided on the ballot or the ballot provided for that purpose, or where voting  
7 machines are used, in the irregular ballot device, designating the party for which the  
8 elector desires such person to be the nominee.

9           **SECTION 14.** 6.80 (2) (f) of the statutes is amended to read:

10          6.80 (2) (f) In the presidential preference primary ~~and other partisan primary~~  
11 elections at polling places where ballots are distributed to electors, unless the ballots  
12 are prepared under s. 5.655 or are utilized with an electronic voting system in which  
13 all candidates appear on the same ballot, after the elector prepares his or her ballot  
14 the elector shall detach the remaining ballots, fold the ballots to be discarded and fold  
15 the completed ballot unless the ballot is intended for counting with automatic  
16 tabulating equipment. The elector shall then either personally deposit the ballots  
17 to be discarded into the separate ballot box marked "blank ballot box," and deposit  
18 the completed ballot into the ballot box indicated by the inspectors, or give the ballots  
19 to an inspector who shall deposit the ballots directly into the appropriate ballot  
20 boxes. The inspectors shall keep the blank ballot box locked until the canvass is  
21 completed and shall dispose of the blank ballots as prescribed by the municipal clerk.

22          **SECTION 15.** 6.87 (4) (b) 1. of the statutes is amended to read:

23          6.87 (4) (b) 1. Except as otherwise provided in s. 6.875, the elector voting  
24 absentee shall make and subscribe to the certification before one witness who is an  
25 adult U.S. citizen. The absent elector, in the presence of the witness, shall mark the



**ASSEMBLY BILL 288**

1 ballot in a manner that will not disclose how the elector's vote is cast. The elector  
2 shall then, still in the presence of the witness, fold the ballots so each is separate and  
3 so that the elector conceals the markings thereon and deposit them in the proper  
4 envelope. If a consolidated ballot under s. 5.655 is used, the elector shall fold the  
5 ballot so that the elector conceals the markings thereon and deposit the ballot in the  
6 proper envelope. If proof of residence under s. 6.34 is required and the document  
7 enclosed by the elector under this subdivision does not constitute proof of residence  
8 under s. 6.34, the elector shall also enclose proof of residence under s. 6.34 in the  
9 envelope. Proof of residence is required if the elector is not a military elector or an  
10 overseas elector and the elector registered by mail and has not voted in an election  
11 in this state. If the elector requested a ballot by means of facsimile transmission or  
12 electronic mail under s. 6.86 (1) (ac), the elector shall enclose in the envelope a copy  
13 of the request ~~which~~ that bears an original signature of the elector. The elector may  
14 receive assistance under sub. (5). The return envelope shall then be sealed. The  
15 witness may not be a candidate. The envelope shall be mailed by the elector, or  
16 delivered in person, to the municipal clerk issuing the ballot or ballots. If the  
17 envelope is mailed from a location outside the United States, the elector shall affix  
18 sufficient postage unless the ballot qualifies for delivery free of postage under federal  
19 law. ~~Failure to return an unused ballot in a primary does not invalidate the ballot~~  
20 ~~on which the elector's votes are cast. Return of more than one marked ballot in a~~  
21 ~~primary or return of a ballot prepared under s. 5.655 or a ballot used with an~~  
22 ~~electronic voting system in a primary which is marked for candidates of more than~~  
23 ~~one party invalidates all votes cast by the elector for candidates in the primary.~~

24 **SECTION 16.** 7.08 (2) (b) of the statutes is amended to read:

**ASSEMBLY BILL 288****SECTION 16**

1           7.08 (2) (b) The certified list of candidates for president and vice president who  
2 have been nominated at a national convention by a party entitled to a separate  
3 column or row on the partisan primary ballot or for whom electors have been  
4 nominated under s. 8.20 shall be sent as soon as possible after the closing date for  
5 filing nomination papers, but no later than the deadlines established in s. 10.06.

6           **SECTION 17.** 7.50 (1) (d) of the statutes, as affected by 2015 Wisconsin Act ...  
7 (Senate Bill 121), is repealed.

8           **SECTION 18.** 7.50 (2) (g) of the statutes is amended to read:

9           7.50 (2) (g) In partisan primaries, if an elector writes in the name of an  
10 individual ~~on a ballot~~ in a column or row other than the one on which that individual's  
11 name is shown as a candidate, the write-in vote may not be counted.

12           **SECTION 19.** 8.16 (1), (6) and (7) of the statutes are amended to read:

13           8.16 (1) Except as provided in sub. (2), the person who receives the greatest  
14 number of votes for an office ~~on a party ballot~~ at any partisan primary, regardless of  
15 whether the person's name appears on the ballot, shall be the party's candidate for  
16 the office, and the person's name shall so appear on the official ballot at the next  
17 election.

18           (6) The persons who receive the greatest number of votes respectively for the  
19 offices of governor and lieutenant governor ~~on for~~ any party ballot at a primary shall  
20 be the party's joint candidates for the offices, and their names shall so appear on the  
21 official ballot at the next election.

22           (7) Nominees chosen at a national convention and under s. 8.18 (2) by each  
23 party entitled to a separate column or row on a partisan primary ballot shall be the  
24 party's candidates for president, vice president, and presidential electors. The state  
25 or national chairperson of each such party shall certify the names of the party's

**ASSEMBLY BILL 288**

1 nominees for president and vice president to the board no later than 5 p.m. on the  
2 first Tuesday in September preceding a presidential election. Each name shall be in  
3 one of the formats authorized in s. 7.08 (2) (a).

4 **SECTION 20.** 8.17 (1) (a) of the statutes is amended to read:

5 8.17 (1) (a) Political parties qualifying for a separate column or row on the  
6 partisan primary ballot under s. 5.62 (1) (b) or (2) shall elect their party  
7 committeemen and committeewomen as provided under sub. (5) (b). The function of  
8 committeemen and committeewomen is to represent their neighborhoods in the  
9 structure of a political party. Committeemen and committeewomen shall act as  
10 liaison representatives between their parties and the residents of the election  
11 districts in which they serve. Activities of committeemen and committeewomen  
12 shall include, but not be limited to, identifying voters; assistance in voter  
13 registration drives; increasing voter participation in political parties; polling and  
14 other methods of passing information from residents to political parties and elected  
15 public officials; and dissemination of information from public officials to residents.  
16 For assistance in those and other activities of interest to a political party, each  
17 committeeman and committeewoman may appoint a captain to engage in these  
18 activities in each ward, if the election district served by the committeeman or  
19 committeewoman includes more than one ward. In an election district ~~which~~ that  
20 includes more than one ward, the committeeman or committeewoman shall  
21 coordinate the activities of the ward captains in promoting the interests of his or her  
22 party.

23 **SECTION 21.** 8.20 (9) of the statutes is amended to read:

24 8.20 (9) Persons nominated by nomination papers without a recognized  
25 political party designation shall be placed on the official ballot at the general election

**ASSEMBLY BILL 288****SECTION 21**

1 and at any partisan election to the right or below the recognized political party  
2 candidates in their own column or row designated “Independent”.” If the candidate’s  
3 name already appears under a recognized political party it may not be listed on the  
4 independent ballot, column or row.

5 **SECTION 22.** 8.50 (3) (b) of the statutes is amended to read:

6 8.50 (3) (b) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the provisions for the  
7 partisan primary under s. 8.15 are applicable to all partisan primaries held under  
8 this section, and the provisions for spring primaries under s. 8.10 are applicable to  
9 all nonpartisan primaries held under this section. In a special partisan primary or  
10 election, the order of the parties on the ballot shall be the same as provided under  
11 s. 5.62 (1) or 5.64 (1) (b). No primary is required for a nonpartisan election in which  
12 not more than 2 candidates for an office appear on the ballot or for a partisan election  
13 in which not more than one candidate for an office appears ~~on~~ in the ballot column  
14 or row of each recognized political party on the ballot. In every special election except  
15 a special election for nonpartisan state office where no candidate is certified to  
16 appear on the ballot, a space for write-in votes shall be provided on the ballot,  
17 regardless of whether a special primary is held.

18 **SECTION 23.** 8.50 (3) (c) of the statutes is repealed.

19 **SECTION 24.** 9.10 (3) (e) of the statutes is amended to read:

20 9.10 (3) (e) For any partisan office, a recall primary shall be held for each  
21 political party ~~which~~ that is entitled to a separate column or row on the partisan  
22 primary ballot under s. 5.62 (1) (b) or (2) and from which more than one candidate  
23 competes for the party’s nomination in the recall election. The primary ballot shall  
24 be prepared in accordance with s. 5.62, insofar as applicable. The person receiving  
25 the highest number of votes in the recall primary for each political party shall be that

**ASSEMBLY BILL 288**

1 party's candidate in the recall election. Independent candidates shall be shown on  
2 the ballot for the recall election only.

3 **SECTION 25.** 10.02 (3) (b) 2. of the statutes is amended to read:

4 10.02 (3) (b) 2. At a partisan primary, the elector shall select the ~~party ballot~~  
5 candidate of his or her choice for each office and shall make a cross (X) next to or  
6 depress the lever or button next to the candidate's name for each office for whom the  
7 elector intends to vote, or shall insert or write in the name of the elector's choice for  
8 a candidate.

9 **SECTION 26.** 11.06 (7m) (a) of the statutes is amended to read:

10 11.06 (7m) (a) If a committee ~~which~~ that was registered under s. 11.05 as a  
11 political party committee or legislative campaign committee supporting candidates  
12 of a political party files an oath under sub. (7) affirming that it does not act in  
13 cooperation or consultation with any candidate who is nominated to appear on the  
14 ~~party ballot~~ in the column or row of the party at a general or special election, that  
15 the committee does not act in concert with, or at the request or suggestion of, such  
16 a candidate, that the committee does not act in cooperation or consultation with such  
17 a candidate or agent or authorized committee of such a candidate who benefits from  
18 a disbursement made in opposition to another candidate, and that the committee  
19 does not act in concert with, or at the request or suggestion of, such a candidate or  
20 agent or authorized committee of such a candidate who benefits from a disbursement  
21 made in opposition to another candidate, the committee filing the oath may not make  
22 any contributions in support of any candidate of the party at the general or special  
23 election or in opposition to any such candidate's opponents exceeding the amounts  
24 specified in s. 11.26 (2), except as authorized in par. (c).

25 **SECTION 27. Initial applicability.**

**ASSEMBLY BILL 288**

**SECTION 27**

1 (1) This act first applies with respect to voting at the 2016 partisan primary  
2 election.

3 (END)